

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A tape library, comprising:

a basic unit; and

one, two or more expansion units coupled to said basic unit;

said basic unit including a housing, recording and/or playback means provided in said housing for recording or playing back data onto or from a recording medium, accommodation means provided in said housing for accommodating a plurality of recording media, feeding means provided in said housing for feeding a recording medium between said accommodation means and said recording and/or playback means, and guide means provided in said housing for guiding the movement of said feeding means;

each of said expansion units including a housing, accommodation means provided in said housing for accommodating a plurality of recording media and guide means provided in said housing for guiding the movement of said feeding means of said basic unit between said accommodation means of the expansion unit and said recording and/or playback means of said basic unit.

2. A tape library according to claim 1, wherein said accommodation means includes a rotatable member

mounted for rotation around an axis substantially parallel to the coupling direction of said basic unit and said expansion unit or units, and a plurality of accommodation sections disposed on an outer periphery of said rotatable member for accommodating recording media.

3. A tape library according to claim 2, wherein said accommodation sections are disposed in a plurality of stages in the direction of the axis.

4. A tape library according to claim 2, wherein said feeding means includes a movable table mounted for movement along said guide means in the direction of the axis, a translate table mounted for back and forth movement with respect to said accommodation sections or said recording and/or playback means on said movement table, and clamp means mounted on said translate table for releasably clamping a recording medium.

5. A tape library according to claim 4, wherein said guide means of said basic unit and said guide means of said expansion unit or units which are coupled to each other are coupled to each other so as to have a length corresponding to the length of said basic unit and said expansion unit or units coupled to each other.

6. A tape library according to claim 5, wherein said basic unit includes an additional one or more

recording and/or playback means, and said feeding means includes a slide table for moving said translate table to a position opposing to any of the recording and/or playback means of said basic unit.

7. A tape library according to claim 6, wherein said accommodation sections further includes a fence provided on the outer side of said accommodation sections for preventing leaping out of a cassette tape from any of said accommodation sections.

8. A tape library according to claim 7, wherein said expansion unit or each or any of said expansion units includes recording and/or playback means for recording or playing back data onto or from a recording medium.

9. A basic unit, comprising:

a housing;

recording and/or playback means provided in said housing for recording or playing back data onto or from a recording medium;

accommodation means provided in said housing for accommodating a recording medium;

feeding means provided in said housing for feeding the recording medium between said accommodation means and said recording and/or playback means; and

guide means provided in said housing for guiding the movement of said feeding means;

said accommodation means including a rotatable member mounted for rotation around an axis and a plurality of accommodation sections disposed on an outer periphery of said rotatable member for accommodating recording media;

said housing having an inlet opening formed therein in an opposing relationship to at least one of said accommodation sections for allowing a recording medium to be inserted into or taken out from one of said accommodation sections.

10. A basic unit according to claim 9, further comprising a control circuit section connected to said accommodation means, recording and/or playback means and feeding means for controlling said accommodation means, recording and/or playback means and feeding means, and wherein, where one or more expansion units are connected to said basic unit, when said feeding means is positioned within said basic unit, said control circuit section controls the position and operation of said feeding means with reference to a position reference point provided in said basic unit, but when said feeding means is within said expansion unit or one of said expansion units, said

control circuit section controls the position and operation of said feeding means with reference to a position reference point provided in the expansion unit.

11. A basic unit according to claim 10, wherein said control circuit section performs, when power supply to said basic unit is made available after one, two or more expansion units are coupled to said basic unit, an initialization process of detecting and storing the position reference point of each of said basic unit and said expansion units.

12. A basic unit according to claim 11, wherein said control circuit section communicates with a control circuit or circuits of said one, two or more expansion units coupled to said basic unit to discriminate the number of the expansion units coupled to said basic unit and stores the discriminated number prior to the detection of the position reference point of each of said basic unit and said expansion unit or units in the initialization process.

13. A basic unit according to claim 10, further comprising a flat cable for interconnecting said control circuit section and said feeding means of said basic unit, said flat cable including a plurality of conductors extending in parallel to each other and joined together

with an insulating material in such a manner as to be formed as an elongated belt, said flat cable being folded over at a substantially central portion in the longitudinal direction thereof, said flat cable being held at a portion in the proximity of the folded portion thereof by a fold holding member such that the angle by the opposite end portions of said flat cable with respect to the folded portion is variable in accordance with the distance between said control circuit section and said feeding means of said basic unit.

14. A basic unit according to claim 13, wherein said fold holding member is formed by molding of a synthetic resin material, and a portion of said fold holding member which is pressed by said flat cable when the opposite end portions of said flat cable are opened has a shape of a cylindrical face around an axis parallel to a principal plane of said flat cable and perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of said flat cable.

15. A basic unit according to claim 13, wherein said fold holding member is formed from a flexible material.

16. An expansion unit which can be coupled to a basic unit when to be used, comprising:

a housing capable of accommodating recording and/or

playback means for recording or playing back data onto or from a recording medium and accommodation means for accommodating a recording medium;

at least one of said recording and/or playback means or said accommodation means being accommodated in said housing;

a control circuit section connected to said recording and/or playback means and/or said accommodation means for controlling said recording and/or playback means and/or said accommodation means; and

guide means for guiding, where said expansion unit is coupled to said basic unit, movement of feeding means for feeding a recording medium between said expansion unit and said basic unit.

17. An expansion unit according to claim 16, wherein said housing has an inlet opening formed therein for allowing a recording medium to be inserted into or taken out from said accommodation section.